

"Pussyfoot" Johnson Game In Fighting Demon Rum

His Sportsmanship When Hazed by London Medical Students in Line With His Daring Battles With Bootleggers in the Indian Country Years Ago

ALL England is talking about "Pussyfoot" Johnson. No one in a generation has supplied the comedians of the halls and the musical comedy stage with as much material for telling gags, or the humorists and cartoonists of the newspapers and magazines of the British Isles with such invaluable material for the whole country to roar over.

He is being attacked violently and lauded violently by the British press, and ever since he arrived in London from America accounts of his doings have been coming home over the cable. Johnson's mission over seas as a representative of the Anti-Saloon League of America, is to help the British Isles follow the United States on the road of national abstinence.

He has a modest office in Fleet street and from it he directs the spectacular raids the dry forces are making upon the old conservative British point of view on the subject of the "pub."

He speaks on street corners and in halls. His hecklers are plenty, but they never "get his goat." The wets hate him and the dries marvel at him. He is always game. Although he has become considerably better known in England than at home, and yet no more picturesque or impressive character ever came out of the West than it was wild and woolly. It is no wonder that he has made the English sit up and take notice, even if they have so far refused to take this prophet of universal prohibition seriously.

Though not taken seriously, Johnson is considered "good sport" by the Britons. This was proved the other day when he was ridden through the streets of London on a stretcher by riotous medical students and was hit in the eye with a stone thrown by one of the mob. He took the whole proceeding in good part, though he did say he would like to get hold of the man who "threw the rock," as the wound was so serious that he might lose the sight of the eye, if not the eye altogether.

This ragging gave Johnson an amount of publicity that years of usual prohibition campaigning never could have produced. Although no representations were made to our State Department because of the hazing, it caused both King George and Queen Mary to call upon the London police for an investigation. It gave Johnson fame in many parts of the British Isles where his name was not even known.

Worked in Indian Country.

William Eugene Johnson first gained great notoriety, or reputation, according to some views it, as law enforcement official for the Federal Government in the Indian country during the administration of President Roosevelt. Acting under orders of the Interior Department, Johnson was told to go to Oklahoma and elsewhere and suppress the liquor traffic among the Indians.

Beyond very general instructions no details were given him. He looked up the word "suppress" in the dictionary.

found just what it meant and proceeded accordingly.

When he took hold of his job he found a great lack both of law and precedent, and also a dearth of enforcement machinery.

Once in the Indian country of Minnesota Johnson and his men smashed two saloons. As soon as they had attacked one of the places the village marshal showed up. They refused to be arrested. One of the deputies went outside and talked with the marshal while "Pussyfoot" continued the work of demolition.

Then came the mayor, village council and a number of citizens. Johnson and his men parleyed until the second saloon had gone the way of the first and then they submitted to arrest. They were taken to the county jail at Crookston, where they were kept eight days and then released.

While Johnson escaped death his deputies were not always so fortunate. Several of them were waylaid and murdered. Others were killed during engagement with lawless elements. But some of them did not go down to death until they had cut some notches in their guns. Johnson himself never killed a man, but he has drawn blood in his own defense more than once.

The name "Pussyfoot" was given him by those whom he was hunting because of his pussyfooting characteristics. He would be to-day and gone to-morrow and leave no trace of his departure. He would start West and come back from the East.

Often he was able to get results by sheer bluff. He would march up to his man and, discarding his own weapon, invite the liquor dealer to do the same, promising him that if he could not handcuff him and take him away the accused man was free. That sort of a bluff won for "Pussyfoot" an admiration even from his enemies in the days when the West and Southwest were newer than they are now and when a fair fight was guaranteed all combatants. It is a fact that Johnson never was afraid of any human being and let folks know it, not, indeed, by bragging or vociferant declaration, but quietly and firmly.

His great size and strength, of course, were in his favor, and even his enemies had to admit that when it came to a fight he was as square as a die.

Not infrequently men who suffered from his enforcement activities became his steadfast friends and loyal enforcers. On his staff he had, first and last, hundreds of men. Some of them had been among the worst desperadoes of the country. He fought fire with fire, set thieves to catch thieves and repaid honor with honor.

There never was a man associated with him who would not gladly have given his life to protect his chief.

Once "Pussyfoot" happened on a peculiar situation. He found a narrow strip of land between Kansas and Oklahoma, which was literally no man's land. An error in surveying had somehow left that little strip, say from a dozen to fifteen feet wide and half a mile long, outside of either State. Three men camped on the narrow strip and built a long, narrow shack, being

careful that no part of it should be in either Kansas or Oklahoma, and opened up a saloon, gambling house and other accommodations. They had no license, of course, because Kansas and Oklahoma, first of all, were dry and there was no State authority to grant them license and because the Federal Government apparently had not concerned itself about the strip.

The three men held themselves without the pale of either State or Federal law and they did an enormous business.

Made Friends of Victims.

Johnson took the ground that if these men were without the pale of the law with respect to observance they also were without the pale with respect to protection, so he took the law in his own hand and went in and smashed them up. He later found some sort of law whereunder they were put behind bars.

Before his entrance into Government service Johnson had been a newspaper man and a writer for the magazines. He put his knowledge of the writing game into his detective work and frequently stirred up things that way.

Once or twice his vigorous and virulent pen landed him in durance vile. Down in Oklahoma there was a hotel which had been violating the law in a wholesale and flagrant manner. The word got to the proprietor that "Pussyfoot" was on his way and he was coming on a certain day to pull the place. During the day a small, unassuming man, a coffin salesman, walked up to the desk and registered "William E. Johnson." Before the ink was dry the coffin salesman found himself picking himself out of the street. They were forthcoming.

"Later in the day another William R. Johnson, not a coffin salesman, walked into the hotel. He was not thrown out. Instead, he arrested the place, broke up its bar and sent the proprietor to jail.



"PUSSYFOOT" JOHNSON

Johnson made firm friends of the Indians. He got to the chiefs and showed them how the white men were debauching their young braves, talking the money for firewater and other wares making trouble. He treated the Indians on the level, and in due time was adopted into two of their tribes. Many of his deputies either were Indians or half breeds and to-day there isn't a man in the world so well known among the red men as he.

When he is at his home in Westerville, Ohio, every few days an Indian, on his way to Washington to see the great white father, stops in to consult "Pussyfoot" and get his help in some matter. Not a day passes in which he does not get at least one letter from an Indian asking some sort of assistance. They write to him about their difficulties with the Indian agent; about their troubles with the Government; about their family affairs; their crops, and goodness knows what else. Many little Indian boys have been named for him.

One day he received a letter from an old Indian out in California who had had trouble with the irrigation officials and could not get water, though he had paid for it. The letter was frank. It began:

"Dear Pussyfoot: I think white man keep den steal. Steal Injun's land. Steal Injun's water. Steal Injun's money."

Then followed a recital of the old man's troubles and an appeal to Johnson to help him out. Johnson wrote to the Indian commissioner and the brave's troubles were at an end.

Every Indian who settles down to farming is given a cow by the Government with which to start his herd. For some reason or other, or through mistake, one Indian didn't get the cow. So he wrote to "Pussyfoot."

"Dear Pussyfoot," he wrote, "I want a cow. Please get me a cow. Government give other Injuns cow, no give me cow."

The Injun got his cow.

Called Methyl Alcohol.

Technically wood alcohol is called methyl alcohol, although it is also popularly known as wood spirit, carbolic, methanol, methyl hydrate and wood naphtha, and under whatever name it appears it is advisable for anyone to let it severely alone. In the United States wood alcohol is manufactured almost exclusively from the destructive distillation of wood, and at the present time there are twenty-eight establishments in New York State engaged in its production. The industry employs 400 persons in the State, all of whom are males. The factories are located principally in Delaware and Sullivan counties, where the raw material grows in abundance, and is cheap and the cost of hauling both raw and finished product is low.

To secure the destructive distillation of wood it is placed in oval or cylindrical iron or steel retorts or ovens and subjected to heat. The retorts are generally set in brick work, and each is provided with a heavy cast iron, tightly fitting door. A stack leads from each retort to a condenser into which the vapor containing wood alcohol and other substances is conducted. The cord wood from which the wood alcohol is made is carefully stacked in the retort until the chamber is completely filled. When cars are used to charge retorts or ovens, holding ap-

proximately eight to ten cords, the entire charge is loaded on the cars and run in on rails.

Coal is used for fuel to heat the retorts. When sufficient heat is applied destructive distillation of the wood takes place. The gaseous products pass over, most of them condensing in their progress. What is known as the permanent gas, however, passes along and is utilized for fuel beneath boilers or furnaces. If the retort doors are broken or do not fit properly gases and vapors escape, which are not alone a source of danger to the plant or an irritation to the eyes of the workmen but constitutes a loss of product.

Escaped smoke and gases from retorts are usually conducted to the furnace rooms, which are usually large frame structures with monitor roof construction. Fires are of common occurrence in these furnaces, due to sparks and cinders lodging in the under side of the roof, where dust is deposited from the retorts and coal pits. This danger, however, is being rapidly eliminated by the use of corrugated iron roofs.

In some factories explosions have occurred because of back pressure of burning gas from furnace to retort. As a result retort doors have been blown off and workmen standing near by have been killed. Various methods are used to prevent back pressure of burning gas, one of the most effective being an outlet pipe with valves from the main duct at a point just before the retort. A second method is by providing valves in each branch leading from each retort to a main. An additional precaution is that of connecting a steam jet to the main pipe. The force of the steam aids in the outward movement of the gas, and the added forward pressure prevents a back pressure.

In the course of manufacture the condensed liquid is neutralized with lime, thereby becoming converted into acetate of lime, which is then dried in kilns. They are usually located on the top of the retorts, so that the radiant heat of the retorts can be utilized for the drying process. The lime must be spread out by hand shovelling, and employees doing this work are exposed to a temperature ranging from 10 to 100 degrees, during the summer, while the temperature of the floor upon which they stand is even higher. Another method of drying, which is preferable from the standpoint of comfort to the workers, consists in locating the kiln in a room above the furnace. The heat collected from the furnaces is communicated to the floor of the adjoining kiln-room, thence discharged up a stack to outer air.

Wood alcohol is used extensively in the arts and crafts. It serves as a solvent for gums, dyes and resins, and as a basic material for the manufacture of various dyes used in the manufacture of leather. Varnishes in which wood alcohol is used possess the advantage of drying quicker than those made with ethyl or grain alcohol. Wood alcohol is more volatile than a lower boiling point it dries faster. It is also used in many industries where shellac is employed, and among these are hat manufacturing, dyeing and stiffening of artificial flowers, making picture frames, applying varnish to the interior of beer vats, shellacking pianos, pencils, toys and wooden patterns. It is also used in stiffening hosiery, making varnishes and lacquers and dyes and numerous chemicals. Even typists occasionally use it to clean the type of their machines without knowledge of its dangerous properties.

The New York State Department of Labor recently made an investigation of conditions in six industries in which wood alcohol is largely employed, and found a distressing lack of knowledge of the dangerous properties of the liquid and of the proper methods of preventing ill effects among the persons who handled it. These industries were hat manufacturing, dyeing of artificial flowers, making picture frames, varnishing brewery vats, manufacturing pencils and making varnishes. In the hat manufacturing establishments visited physical defects of twenty workers were noted, all due to wood alcohol, and consisting of dermatitis, or skin inflammation, anemia, neuritis, and conjunctivitis, or inflammation of the delicate membrane which lines the lids and covers the eyeball. Similar conditions although not quite so severe, existed in the other industries, and the Department of Labor immediately promulgated and enforced rules which lessened the dangers.

In a special bulletin covering this investigation into the wood alcohol industry the department gave the following conclusions:

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Wood Alcohol's Danger Much in the Public Eye

Prohibition Has Led Many to Drink Concoctions of It With Fatal Effect, but Menace Is Not Limited That Way, Existing in Other Forms as Well

THIS newspapers of the United States have printed volumes concerning the disastrous consequences of drinking pure wood alcohol or any liquid containing it, yet the average person still does not seem to realize that wood alcohol is the most dangerous and most prevalent industrial poison of the alcohol used in the various trades, and instances of death and serious illness brought on by its use are multiplying every year. Wood alcohol produces toxic effects whether taken internally, inhaled through the lungs or when coming directly in contact with the skin. Impairment of vision, complete loss of eyesight and even death often result from drinking as well as from inhaling the poison.

People working in places where large quantities of wood alcohol were used constantly have died from inhaling the fumes. So dangerous is this poison that in some cases death occurred when persons were subjected only a day or two to the fumes of wood alcohol. Direct action of the poison upon the skin when used externally, although not quite as disastrous as its serious consequences. It produces inflammation of the skin and in extreme cases death of the affected organ. Newspaper readers are familiar with those instances where death and blindness have resulted when wood alcohol has been sold as whiskey after being colored with burnt sugar or some other substance. There also have been many cases of persons who have drunk wood alcohol, knowing it to be such merely because they wanted the undoubted kick that any alcohol will give. But unfortunately the kick obtained from wood alcohol is usually permanent.

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Ruby Worth \$100,000, a Laborer's Lucky Stone

Poor Omaha Man Never Realized He Had a Fortune in His Pocket for Twenty Years

A MONTH ago John Mihok, 1943 South Twentieth street, Omaha, was a poor man, telling daily as a furniture polisher and earning just enough to keep the wolf from the door of the old house that sheltered himself, his wife and five children. To-day he is "worth" at least \$75,000. Yet he has no more to-day than he had a month ago. But to-day he knows the value of what he has.

For he had discovered that the "good luck stone" which he carried in his pocket for years is really the largest flawless pigeon-blood ruby in the world, weighing 23.9 carats.

Gustav Gillman, lapidary, of Chicago, who cut and polished the "great Mihok," as it has been called, estimated its value at \$100,000.

The story of the ruby is one that thrills and one from which ministers might preach a great sermon. John Mihok was born in the village of Nagy Koros, on the extreme eastern border of Hungary. There he grew up, and as he grew he decided to go to America to seek his fortune. But he had his fortune with him already—although he didn't know it.

For his father had picked up a pretty stone one day by the side of a small stream and had brought it home. It rested on the mantel in the little home where the family lived. It had wonderful deep, clear, carmine red colorings; it was indeed a pretty stone, and it lay on the mantel there for several years.

When John started for America, after the whole family had saved for years to buy his passage, his father when he said good-by put into the young man's hand the "pretty stone." "Maybe it will bring you luck in the great country across the water, John," he said, "and maybe it will make it so you make a lot of money and send it back to us."

John took the stone and said: "Maybe it will bring me good luck."



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The "luck stone" was nothing but a "pretty stone."

"The expression on Mr. Gillman's face was not encouraging. He smiled a little as Mr. Mihok held the package in which he reposed the stone. Mr. Gillman took the stone in his hand and immediately the cynical smile disappeared. His eyes seemed to bulge and his mouth opened.

"He gave an exclamation, then rushed with the stone to his workroom and put it through various tests, talking all the while in most excited fashion.

"And then he told us that we had a wonderful ruby. He could not tell how pure it was before cutting it, but he said it was probably one of the finest gems in the world of its kind."

Mr. McCarthy and Mr. Mihok took turns remaining with Mr. Gillman during the process of cutting and polishing and when that work had been completed he told them in a voice filled with awe that the ruby weighed 23.9 carats, that it is flawless, that it is 8.5 hard and has a specific gravity of 4.05.

"Did we celebrate?" said Mr. Mihok. "No, we did not. We were too much afraid of what would happen to that ruby. Think of having such a stone, worth \$100,000, in your possession."

And the two men, after paying the lapidary, actually took the polished gem back to Omaha with them, sitting up all night in the car, scarcely daring to talk in the fascination of having a comparatively small object in whose translucent depths there was the fascinating play of carmine red light, worth \$100,000.

The two men arrived in Omaha safely with the "great Mihok," as it has been named, and they went directly to the United States National Bank safe deposit vaults, where they rented a box and saw the ruby safely locked therein.

This was last Friday. Then Mr. Mihok went home and told the news to his wife. He had not telegraphed to her from Chicago and the news was completely a surprise to her.

"She wouldn't believe me at first when I told her we would not have to work any more and that we could move in a nice house where we will have electric lights," he said, "but now she believes me and we will have comfort in life."

"We will buy a new home. I know a nice one, just what we want, for \$4,000. And we are going to buy a little automobile. The rest of the money we will put in Liberty bonds. I think. That is safe. We are no fools. We don't spend it all and we don't try to get rich quick. We put it away for our old age and for our

children's education." The oldest boy, who left school last year,